

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

خطبة الجمعة

Friday Sermon

Taqwā: The God-Conscious Heart

DELIVERED AT

Masjid Adam



ŞİFAH

SCHOOL OF ISLAMIC
FOUNDATIONS &
ADVOCACY FOR HUMANITY

Taqwā: The God-Conscious Heart

The First Khutbah

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ، وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ
أَعْمَالِنَا، مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ، وَمَنْ يَضِلَّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا
اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ. أَمَّا بَعْدُ: فَإِنَّ أَصْدَقَ
الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ، وَخَيْرُ الْهَدْيِ هَدْيُ مُحَمَّدٍ ﷺ، وَشَرُّ الْأُمُورِ مُحْدَثَاتُهَا، وَكُلُّ مُحْدَثَةٍ
بِدْعَةٌ، وَكُلُّ بِدْعَةٍ ضَلَالَةٌ، وَكُلُّ ضَلَالَةٍ فِي النَّارِ.

All praise belongs to Allah. We praise Him, we seek His help, and we seek His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allah from the evil within ourselves and from our sinful deeds. Whomever Allah guides, none can lead astray, and whomever He leaves astray, none can guide. I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah alone, having no partner, and I bear witness that Muḥammad is His servant and His Messenger. To proceed: the truest speech is the Book of Allah, the best guidance is the guidance of Muḥammad ﷺ, the worst of affairs are the newly invented matters, every innovation is misguidance, and every misguidance is in the Fire.

نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ، أَمَّا بَعْدُ: فَأَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ، بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ
الرَّحِيمِ.

رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي * وَيَسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي * وَاحْلُلْ عُقْدَةً مِنْ لِسَانِي * يَفْقَهُوا
قَوْلِي *

We praise Him, and we send blessings upon His noble Messenger. To proceed: I seek refuge with Allah from Satan, the accursed; in the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. My Lord, expand for me my breast, and ease for me my task, and untie the knot from my tongue, that they may understand my speech.

Sūrah Tā Hā (20:25 to 28)

Dear brothers and sisters, **assalāmu ‘alaykum wa raḥmatullāhi wa barakātuh.**

The Advice that Allah Gave to All of Creation

I begin by advising my own soul first, and then advising you, with the same counsel that Allah gave to the first of creation and to the last. It is the counsel He entrusted to Nūḥ and Ibrāhīm, to Mūsā and ‘Īsā, to our Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, and to every believer who hopes to stand before Allah on the Day of Judgement. Allah did not make His greatest advice to humanity a matter of wealth, or status, or knowledge of the world, or power over others. He made it a single word. He said:

وَلَقَدْ وَصَّيْنَا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ أَنْ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ *

And We have certainly instructed those who were given the Scripture before you, and you yourselves, to fear Allah.

Sūrah an-Nisā’ (4:131)

Reflect upon this, brothers and sisters. Across every nation and every age, the advice did not change. Every Prophet called his people to taqwā. Every righteous scholar after them lived and taught taqwā. Every generation that held to it found honour, and every generation that abandoned it slipped into decline, no matter how advanced it became. We live today in a time of unmatched knowledge and technology, and yet the heart of humanity is restless, anxious, and weary, broken by dishonesty, by the collapse of families, by addiction, and by a quiet emptiness that no device can fill. The reason is that so many have chased the advancement of the world while neglecting the one foundation Allah laid down for the success of the soul. That foundation is taqwā.

We hear this word so often that it can pass over us like water over stone, leaving no mark. Yet the one who pauses and asks what it truly means will find that it reorganizes his entire life. Taqwā is not a feeling that visits us inside the masjid and leaves us at the door. It is a bond between a servant and his Lord that travels into the home, the workplace, the marketplace, and into those private hours when no human eye is watching and only Allah sees. This morning we will sit with this word together: what it is, how the Qur'an paints the portrait of its people, how the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions lived it, and how it must shape the way we carry our phones, raise our children, earn our living, and speak about one another.

The Foundation in the Book of Allah

Allah, the Most High, did not leave taqwā as a vague sentiment. He commanded it directly, and He attached to it the heaviest of conditions. He said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ *

O you who believe, fear Allah as He ought to be feared, and do not die except as Muslims, in submission to Him.

Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān (3:102)

Consider the weight of this. Allah did not say simply to fear Him, but to fear Him as He ought to be feared, with a taqwā worthy of His majesty. When this verse was revealed, it weighed heavily upon the Companions, for who among the children of Adam can give Allah His full right? Then Allah, in His mercy, revealed the verse that eased them, that He should be feared according to their capacity. This is the way of our religion. The standard is held high so that the heart never grows complacent, yet the path is made gentle so that the servant never despairs.

What does it mean to fear Allah as He ought to be feared? The Companions did not leave us to guess. ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd, may Allah be pleased with him, explained the true taqwā in words that the scholars of tafsīr have preserved across the centuries.

أَنْ يُطَاعَ فَلَا يُعْصَى، وَيُذَكَّرَ فَلَا يُنْسَى، وَيُشْكَرَ فَلَا يُكْفَرُ.

It is that Allah be obeyed and not disobeyed, that He be remembered and not forgotten, and that He be thanked and not denied.

‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd, on the meaning of ḥaqqā tuqātih, cited by Ibn Kathīr in his Tafsīr

Look at how complete this is. Obedience without disobedience guards the limbs. Remembrance without forgetfulness guards the heart. Gratitude without denial guards the tongue and the soul. Ibn Kathīr, may Allah have mercy on him, gathered the words of the early scholars and concluded that taqwā in its essence is that the servant places between himself and what he fears a shield, and the shield between a servant and the punishment of his Lord is to obey His commands and to avoid what He has forbidden.

The Meaning of the Word

The scholars of language tell us that the word taqwā comes from the root wiqāyah, which is to place a protection or a barrier between yourself and something harmful. Al-Qurṭubī, may Allah have mercy on him, notes in his Tafsīr that the muttaqī is the one who takes a guard for himself against the punishment of Allah, and that guard is obedience. The image the early Muslims used was simple and unforgettable. ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, may Allah be pleased with him, once asked Ubayy ibn Ka‘b about taqwā. Ubayy said, Have you ever walked a path full of thorns? ‘Umar said, Yes. Ubayy asked, What did you do? ‘Umar said, I tucked up my garment and took great care where I stepped. Ubayy said, That is taqwā.

This world is that thorny path. Every gathering, every transaction, every screen, every conversation carries something that can tear the garment of our religion if we walk carelessly. Taqwā is to walk through it awake, lifting the heart above what would wound it, careful of every step because we know Who is watching. Perhaps the most precise definition ever given came from the noble Tābi‘ī Ṭalq ibn Ḥabīb, and the scholars of every generation have repeated it because it captures both the outward and the inward.

Taqwā is that you act in obedience to Allah, upon a light from Allah, hoping for the reward of Allah; and that you leave the disobedience of Allah, upon a light from Allah, fearing the punishment of Allah.

Ṭalq ibn Ḥabīb, reported by Ibn Abī Shaybah in al-Muṣannaf

Notice that he did not say merely to perform good deeds and abandon sins. He said to do so upon a light from Allah, which is knowledge and sincerity, and with the heart suspended between hope and fear. An action without knowledge is misguidance, and an action without sincerity is hollow. Taqwā unites the deed of the limb with the light of the heart. And ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, may Allah be pleased with him, gathered it into four pillars that are worth memorising.

Taqwā is fear of the Majestic, acting upon what was revealed, contentment with little, and preparing for the day of departure.

‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, may Allah be pleased with him

Look how complete this is, brothers and sisters. Fear of Allah alone is not enough, for many people fear consequences yet still disobey. Knowledge alone is not enough, for many know and do not act. Good intentions alone are not enough, for many intend well and never prepare for the Hereafter. True taqwā joins them all together: reverence, action upon revelation, simplicity of desire, and readiness for the meeting with Allah.

The Portrait of the People of Taqwā

It is a remarkable thing that Allah opens the longest chapter of His Book not with a list of laws but with a portrait of the people of taqwā, as though to say that everything that follows is for them. He does not only command us to have taqwā. He shows us what its people look like, so that we may measure ourselves against the description. He said:

ذَٰلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ * الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ
وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ * وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِن قَبْلِكَ وَبِالْآخِرَةِ
هُمْ يوقِنُونَ * أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَىٰ هُدًى مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ *

This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for those who have taqwā: those who believe in the unseen, establish the prayer, and spend out of what We have provided them; and who believe in what was revealed to you and what was revealed before you, and who are certain of the Hereafter. It is they who are upon guidance from their Lord, and it is they who are the successful.

Sūrah al-Baqarah (2:2 to 5)

Consider the first quality, belief in the unseen. The believer knows that reality is far wider than what the eye can see or the instrument can measure. He knows the angels are real though he has never seen them, that the grave is real, that the Day of Judgement is approaching, and that Paradise and the Fire are waiting. Our age trains people to trust only what can be observed, yet the deepest realities of our existence are unseen. Allah is unseen. The soul within you is unseen. The Hereafter is unseen. And it is precisely these hidden realities that shape every honest decision the believer makes.

The second quality is that they establish the prayer. Allah did not say they merely pray. Many people pray. Ibn Kathīr, may Allah have mercy on him, explains that to establish the prayer is to perform it correctly, consistently, with sincerity, and upon the guidance of the Messenger ﷺ. For the muttaqī the prayer becomes the axis around which the day turns. Work bends around the prayer, travel bends around it, sleep bends around it, because he knows that it is the pillar upon which everything else stands. The Prophet ﷺ made this plain.

رَأْسُ الْأَمْرِ الْإِسْلَامُ، وَعَمُودُهُ الصَّلَاةُ، وَذِرْوَةُ سَنَامِهِ الْجِهَادُ.

The head of the matter is Islam, its pillar is the prayer, and the peak of its summit is jihād.

Source: Jāmi‘ at-Tirmidhī **Hadith No:** 2616 **Authenticity:** Ṣaḥīḥ (graded Ṣaḥīḥ by al-Albānī)

The third quality is that they spend from what Allah has given them. Notice the wording, that they spend out of what We have provided them. Your income is from Allah. Your home, your health, your children, your very breath are a trust placed in your hands by the One who can take them back in an instant. The muttaqī understands this, and so his hand is open. He spends upon his family, upon the poor, upon the masjid, upon the teaching of this religion, not because his wealth is large but because his trust in Allah is large. The fourth quality gathers the others, that they are certain of the Hereafter. Brothers and sisters, most of the sins committed in this world are committed because death feels far

away and the reckoning feels like a rumour. If a man truly felt himself standing before Allah before every act, the merchant would not cheat, the tongue would not lie, the eye would not betray, and the hand would not reach for the unlawful. Certainty about the Hereafter is the quiet engine of taqwā, and the more the heart remembers that meeting, the stronger the taqwā grows.

Taqwā Resides in the Heart

If taqwā were only a matter of outward acts, it could be counterfeited. A person could pray in the front row and fast every white day and still carry a heart hardened toward the slave girl who serves him or the brother whose reputation he tears apart in private. So the Messenger of Allah ﷺ pointed to the true seat of taqwā. He gestured to his chest and said:

الْمُسْلِمُ أَخُو الْمُسْلِمِ، لَا يَظْلِمُهُ وَلَا يَخْذُلُهُ وَلَا يَحْقِرُهُ، التَّقْوَى هَاهُنَا، وَيُشِيرُ إِلَى صَدْرِهِ
ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ.

The Muslim is the brother of the Muslim. He does not wrong him, nor abandon him, nor despise him. Taqwā is here, and he pointed to his chest three times.

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** 2564 **Authenticity:** Ṣaḥīḥ

He pointed three times so that no one would miss it. The piety Allah weighs is not measured by the length of the beard alone or the marks of prostration alone, beloved as those signs are. It is measured by what sits in the chest when no one is looking. This is why the Prophet ﷺ taught us that taqwā is the deed most likely to admit people into Paradise. He was asked what most often takes people to the Garden, and he answered, the taqwā of Allah and good character. The first word concerns the servant's bond with his Lord, and the second concerns his dealings with creation. A complete believer guards both.

Taqwā is Built Deed by Deed

Many of us imagine taqwā as a mountain peak reserved for saints, and so we never begin the climb. The Prophet ﷺ corrected this. He showed that taqwā is not one heroic act but a thousand small and steady choices, and he tied to it a mercy for the moment we stumble.

اتَّقِ اللَّهَ حَيْثُمَا كُنْتَ، وَأَتْبِعِ السَّيِّئَةَ الْحَسَنَةَ تَمْحُهَا، وَخَالِقِ النَّاسَ بِخُلُقٍ حَسَنٍ.

Be conscious of Allah wherever you are. Follow up a bad deed with a good deed and it will wipe it out. And treat people with good character.

Source: Jāmi' at-Tirmidhī **Hadith No:** 1987 **Authenticity:** Ḥasan

Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī, may Allah have mercy on him, devoted a long and beautiful commentary to this hadith in Jāmi‘ al-‘Ulūm wal-Ḥikam. He observed that the Prophet ﷺ gathered the rights of Allah and the rights of His servants into a single breath. Be conscious of Allah wherever you are is the right of the Lord, in private before it is in public, for the words wherever you are mean in the seen and the unseen alike. Follow a bad deed with a good deed is the treatment for the heart when it falls, because the son of Adam will sin, and the best of those who sin are those who turn back. And treat people with good character is the right of creation. Ibn Rajab points out that good character is itself the fruit of taqwā, for the one who fears Allah cannot remain harsh and arrogant with the servants of Allah.

Hear the gentleness in this. Taqwā does not demand that you never fall. It demands that you do not stay down. When you slip into a sin, you do not abandon the path in despair. You rise, you seek forgiveness, you place a good deed upon the wound, and you continue. Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, may Allah have mercy on him, described the people of this quality with words worth carrying in the heart.

The people of taqwā are those who avoided what Allah made forbidden upon them and who carried out what Allah made obligatory upon them. They did not stop seeking even after they had been given, for they feared that their deeds might not be accepted.

Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, on the description of the muttaqīn

Taqwā Does Not Mean Perfection

Many of us carry a heavy and mistaken idea of the muttaqī. We imagine a person who never struggles, never sins, never loses his temper, never slips, and because we know our own hearts too well, we quietly conclude that taqwā is not for people like us. Brothers and sisters, Allah Himself corrects this misunderstanding. When He described the people of Paradise, He did not describe angels. He described people who fall and then rise. He said:

وَسَارِعُوا إِلَىٰ مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ *
 الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَالْكَاظِمِينَ الْغَيْظَ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ
 الْمُحْسِنِينَ * وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا فَاحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا لِذُنُوبِهِمْ
 وَمَنْ يَغْفِرِ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَلَمْ يُصِرُّوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلُوا وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ *

And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord and a Garden whose breadth is the heavens and the earth, prepared for the people of taqwā: those who spend in ease and in hardship, who restrain their anger, and who pardon people; and Allah loves those who do good. And those who, when they commit an indecency or wrong themselves, remember Allah and seek forgiveness for their sins, and who can forgive sins except Allah, and who do not persist in what they have done while they know.

Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān (3:133 to 135)

Read that description again and let it lift the weight from your chest. The people of taqwā sometimes wrong themselves. Sometimes they fall into sin. What sets them apart is not that they never fall, but what they do the moment they have fallen. They remember Allah. They turn back. They do not lie on the ground. Ibn al-Qayyim, may Allah have mercy on him, captured this when he said that the believer may fall into sin again and again, yet each time he returns to Allah in repentance, for the danger was never in the falling, the danger is in remaining on the ground. This is among the deceptions of Shayṭān. After he lures a person into a sin, he whispers that the person is now too far gone, too stained for mercy, so that despair finishes what the sin began. But the door of repentance stays open until the soul reaches the throat, and Allah loves the servant who keeps returning.

See too which qualities Allah placed at the heart of His description: restraining anger and pardoning people. He did not say those who never feel anger, for anger is natural and even the Prophets felt it. He praised those who hold its reins. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ taught us a definition of strength that overturns the one the world worships.

لَيْسَ الشَّدِيدُ بِالصُّرْعَةِ، إِنَّمَا الشَّدِيدُ الَّذِي يَمْلِكُ نَفْسَهُ عِنْدَ الْغَضَبِ.

The strong one is not the one who overpowers others in wrestling. The strong one is only he who controls himself at the moment of anger.

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** Bukhārī 6114, Muslim 2609 **Authenticity:** Muttafaqun ‘Alayh

Brothers and sisters, how many homes have been broken by a single moment of unrestrained anger. How many marriages ended over a few sentences that could never be recalled. How many fathers and

children stopped speaking because of words thrown in a flash of rage. The muttaqī knows that every word is written and will be read back to him, so he pauses before he speaks, he remembers Allah before he reacts, and he chooses obedience over the heat of the moment. And higher still than restraining anger is to pardon the one who wronged you, which Allah joins to His love for those who excel in good. Of all our acts of worship, forgiveness may be the hardest, because prayer asks effort and fasting asks patience and charity asks money, but forgiveness asks us to defeat our own ego, which craves the last word and the taste of revenge.

There is no greater example of this than the Messenger ﷺ on the day Makkah opened to him. After twenty three years of mockery, boycott, torture of his Companions, exile from his own city, and plots upon his life, he entered as a conqueror, and the very people who had hunted him now stood helpless before him, awaiting his judgement. He asked them what they expected, and then he said:

اذهبوا فأنتم الطلقاء.

Go, for you are free.

The Prophet ﷺ on the Day of the Conquest of Makkah, as reported in the books of Sīrah

That was taqwā wearing the face of mercy. That was the strength that controls itself at the very moment it could strike. This is the character Allah is calling us toward, and it is within the reach of anyone willing to return to Him after every fall.

Scrupulousness and the Grey Areas

There is a higher station of taqwā that the early Muslims guarded closely, and it concerns the doubtful matters that sit between the clearly lawful and the clearly unlawful. The Prophet ﷺ drew the map for us.

إِنَّ الْحَلَالَ بَيْنَ وَإِنَّ الْحَرَامَ بَيْنَ، وَبَيْنَهُمَا أُمُورٌ مُشْتَبِهَاتٌ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا كَثِيرٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ، فَمَنْ اتَّقَى الشُّبُهَاتِ اسْتَبْرَأَ لِدِينِهِ وَعِزِّهِ.

The lawful is clear and the unlawful is clear, and between them are doubtful matters that many people do not know. Whoever guards himself against the doubtful matters has protected his religion and his honour.

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** Bukhārī 52, Muslim 1599 **Authenticity:** Muttafaqun ‘Alayh

The believer with taqwā does not live at the very edge of what is permitted, leaning over into doubt. He keeps a margin between himself and the forbidden, the way a careful shepherd keeps his flock back from the boundary of another man's field lest they wander into it. This is the meaning of the

famous saying of the early Muslims, that they left seventy doors of the lawful out of fear of falling into one door of the unlawful. In an age of contracts we do not read, of income we do not examine, and of entertainment we consume without question, this margin of caution is the very heart of taqwā.

The Reward of Taqwā in This Life and the Next

Allah did not command taqwā and leave the servant empty handed. He attached to it some of the greatest promises in His Book. To the one burdened by hardship with no visible way out, He said:

وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا * وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ^ج

And whoever fears Allah, He will make for him a way out, and will provide for him from where he does not expect.

Sūrah at-Ṭalāq (65:2 to 3)

Aṣ-Sa'dī, may Allah have mercy on him, comments that whoever has taqwā of Allah by performing His commands and avoiding His prohibitions, Allah will reward him in his religion and his worldly life, and from the reward is that He grants him relief from every difficulty and distress. When the affairs of the world close around a believer like a tightening fist, the débt that cannot be paid, the illness that will not lift, the door that will not open, his response is not panic but obedience. He turns to his Lord, he straightens his dealings, he guards his prayer, and Allah ties His help to that taqwā. This is the provision the believer carries for the longest journey of all. Allah described the pilgrim preparing for travel and then lifted the eyes of the whole Ummah to a greater provision.

وَتَزَوَّدُوا فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ الزَّادِ التَّقْوَىٰ^ص وَاتَّقُونِ يَا أُولِيَ الْأَلْبَابِ *

And take provision, but indeed the best provision is taqwā. So fear Me, O people of understanding.

Sūrah al-Baqarah (2:197)

Everything else we gather in this life stays behind at the edge of the grave. The wealth, the title, the property, the followers, all of it remains on the surface of the earth while we are lowered beneath it. Taqwā is the one provision that descends with us and meets us on the other side. And it is taqwā, not lineage or language or wealth, that raises a person in the sight of Allah.

إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ^ج إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ *

Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most God-conscious of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Aware.

Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt (49:13)

How the Prophet ﷺ and His Companions Lived It

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was the most God-conscious of creation, and yet his taqwā was never a barrier between him and mercy. Recall the day of Ṭā'if, when he carried the message to a town that answered him with stones until the blood ran into his sandals. The angel of the mountains was sent and offered to crush the people between the two mountains. A man without taqwā, holding such power in a moment of such pain, would have taken his revenge. But the one whose heart was filled with the consciousness of Allah answered that he hoped Allah would bring from their descendants those who would worship Him alone. That is taqwā under injury. It restrains the hand even when the hand is able.

Recall also the hijrah, when the Prophet ﷺ and Abū Bakr lay hidden in the cave of Thawr while the disbelievers stood at its mouth, so close that Abū Bakr whispered that if one of them looked down at his feet he would see them. The Prophet ﷺ did not say there was no danger. He said, do not grieve, for Allah is with us. That is the taqwā that produces tawakkul. The one who is conscious of Allah in ease finds Allah with him in hardship.

As for his Companions, they carried this consciousness into the smallest corners of their lives. 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, who ruled from the borders of Persia to the edge of Africa, would hold a straw and say that he wished he were this straw, that he were nothing at all, out of fear of the standing before Allah. This is the same 'Umar whose justice the world still studies. His strength in governing the people came from his trembling before his Lord in private. Abū Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddīq, may Allah be pleased with him, once swallowed a morsel before learning it came from a doubtful source, and when he learned the truth he forced himself to bring it back up, saying he would have done so even if it cost him his life, because he had heard the Prophet ﷺ warn that a body nourished by the unlawful is more deserving of the Fire. Consider the distance between that scrupulousness and our own carelessness about what enters our homes and our stomachs and our accounts.

'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, may Allah be pleased with him, would tremble and turn pale when the time of prayer came, and when asked he would say that the trust which Allah offered to the heavens and the earth and the mountains had come to him. And 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd, whose definition of taqwā we have already heard, lived it so fully that the Prophet ﷺ loved to hear the Qur'an recited in his voice, and wept when he recited the verse asking how it will be when We bring forth from every nation a witness and bring you, O Muḥammad, as a witness over these.

Taqwā in the Life We Actually Live

It would be a failure of this gathering if we spoke of taqwā only in the language of the past and never asked what it demands of us on the drive home from this masjid. The arena of taqwā has not changed in its reality, only in its surface. Consider where the test now lies.

Taqwā in Private, in the Age of the Screen

The Companions feared Allah in the unseen, when no human watched them. Today every one of us holds in his pocket a private world that no spouse, no parent, and no friend can see into. What a person opens on that screen when the door is locked is the truest measure of his taqwā in this generation. Allah sees the glance that no one else witnesses. He knows what is typed and then deleted, what is searched in secret, what is watched in the dark. The believer who lowers his gaze online when he could indulge unseen is practising the very taqwā that raised the early Muslims. Ask yourself honestly, if every page I visited this week were displayed upon the wall of this masjid, would I be able to stand among you?

Taqwā of the Tongue, in the Age of Endless Talk

We have been given platforms our grandparents could not imagine, and with them the power to wound a reputation before a thousand people in a single moment. Backbiting, which Allah likened to eating the flesh of a dead brother, now travels faster than ever and is dressed up as news, as concern, as humour. The forwarded message we did not verify, the comment that mocks a brother, the screenshot that exposes a sister, the gossip we consume about people we have never met, all of it is weighed. The Prophet ﷺ taught that whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should speak good or remain silent. In a time when silence has become the rarest of acts, holding the tongue and the thumb is a high station of taqwā.

Taqwā in Earning and in Trust

Many of us are scrupulous in prayer and careless in income. We examine the direction of the qiblah to the degree, yet never examine whether our earnings carry ribā, deception, or a broken contract. The believer with taqwā asks where his money comes from before he asks how much of it there is. He fulfils the contract he signed even when he could escape it, he returns what was entrusted to him, he is honest in the work he does remotely when no manager is watching the hours, and he does not let the ease of a digital transaction loosen the honesty that Allah commands. The barakah of a small lawful income is greater than the emptiness of a large unlawful one.

Taqwā in the Home

Allah opened the verse of taqwā with the address, O you who believe, and then in the same surah spoke of guarding the family. The man who is gentle in the masjid and harsh at home has misunderstood his religion. Taqwā in the home is to fear Allah regarding the rights of a spouse, to be just between children, to honour parents in their old age when they have grown difficult and dependent, and to raise the young upon the remembrance of Allah rather than abandoning them to a screen that will raise them in our place. The Prophet ﷺ said the best of you are the best to their families, and he was the best of them. A father's taqwā is the first wall of protection around his children.

None of these arenas, the screen, the tongue, the earning, and the home, requires a journey to a distant land or a station beyond the reach of ordinary people. They are the very fabric of the lives we already lead. This is the mercy of taqwā, brothers and sisters. It does not ask us to leave the world. It asks us to walk through it awake.

A Moment of Honest Accounting

Allah joined the command of taqwā to the duty of self-examination in a single verse, a verse ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb is reported to have loved and recited often. He said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْتَنْظُرْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ لِغَدٍ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ *

O you who believe, fear Allah, and let every soul look to what it has sent forth for tomorrow. And fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is Aware of what you do.

Sūrah al-Hashr (59:18)

Notice that Allah placed taqwā on both sides of the command to examine the soul, opening with it and closing with it, as though to say that honest accounting can only stand between two walls of God-consciousness. The early Muslims understood tomorrow here to mean the Day of Resurrection, so near to them that it felt like the next morning. ‘Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, would say to take account of yourselves before you are taken to account, and to weigh your deeds before they are weighed for you. The believer who audits his own soul each night while it is still cheap to correct will find the great audit of the Hereafter made light. So before we close this first khuṭbah, let each of us turn the gaze inward, for the one who takes account of himself in this life will find the reckoning of the next made lighter. Ask, without flattering yourself, how is my prayer, is it a living conversation or a hurried habit. How is my relationship with the Qur'an, when did I last open it with the intention to be changed by it. How is my character with the people who see me at my worst, my family and those who serve me. And the question that gathers all the others, what exactly am I preparing to present before Allah on the day when the wealth and the children will be of no benefit, and only the one who comes to Allah with a sound heart will be saved. These questions are not meant to crush us. They are the lantern of the muttaqī, who walks the thorny path with his eyes open.

I say these words of mine, and I seek the forgiveness of Allah for me and for you, so seek His forgiveness, for indeed He is the Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful.

أَقُولُ قَوْلِي هَذَا وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ لِي وَلَكُمْ فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ.

I say this statement of mine, and I seek the forgiveness of Allah for myself and for you, so seek His forgiveness, for He is the Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful.

Closing of the First Khutbah

The Second Khutbah

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ، وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى أَشْرَفِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ، نَبِيِّنَا مُحَمَّدٍ
وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ. اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ، كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ
وَعَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مَجِيدٌ.

All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the worlds, and may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon the noblest of the Prophets and Messengers, our Prophet Muḥammad, and upon his family and all his Companions. O Allah, send blessings upon Muḥammad and upon the family of Muḥammad as You sent blessings upon Ibrāhīm and upon the family of Ibrāhīm. Indeed, You are Praiseworthy and Glorious.

A Reminder Carried Home

Dear brothers and sisters, in the first khuṭbah we learned that taqwā is a shield the servant places between himself and the punishment of his Lord, woven from obedience and lit by knowledge, and that its true seat is the heart. We saw that it is built not by a single great act but by steady choices, that it rises again after every fall through repentance and a good deed, and that it is the believer's provision for the journey and his way out of every hardship. The danger now is that we admire these meanings for an hour and leave them at the door. So let us turn admiration into a plan.

A Practical Plan to Carry Taqwā

Taqwā grows the way a tree grows, through small waterings repeated daily, not through a single flood. The Prophet ﷺ pointed us to this principle when he taught that the deeds dearest to Allah are not the largest but the most constant.

أَحَبُّ الْأَعْمَالِ إِلَى اللَّهِ أَدْوَمُهَا وَإِنْ قَلَّ.

The most beloved of deeds to Allah are the most constant of them, even if they are few.

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** Bukhārī 6464, Muslim 783 **Authenticity:** Muttafaqun 'Alayh

So do not resolve this Friday upon a mountain you will abandon by Monday. Resolve upon what is small and lasting. Begin with the prayer, for it is the pillar, and commit to guarding one prayer you have been neglecting, returning it to its time and praying it as though it were your last. Keep a daily appointment with the Book of Allah, even if it is a single page read slowly with its meaning, for the

Qur'an was sent to be lived and not merely recited, and a small portion that touches the heart is better than a large portion that passes the tongue. Take a fixed portion of the day for istighfār and dhikr, so that the tongue stays moist with the remembrance of Allah and the heart does not harden, for hearts rust as iron rusts, and their polish is the remembrance of Allah. Give in charity, even a little and even in secret, for charity extinguishes sin as water extinguishes fire, and the hidden gift trains the soul to fear the One who sees what no eye sees. Choose your company with care, for a person follows the way of his close friend, and the Prophet ﷺ likened the righteous companion to the seller of musk who leaves you with a pleasant scent even if you buy nothing from him. And guard the ties of your family, beginning with your parents in their old age and your spouse and your children, for taqwā that does not soften the home has not yet reached its root.

Between Hope and Fear

Let no one leave this place crushed by despair, and let no one leave deceived by false security. Brothers and sisters, the believer walks toward his Lord upon two wings, the fear that keeps him back from sin and the hope that keeps him from despair, and a bird cannot fly upon one wing. Allah is severe in punishment, and Allah is the Most Forgiving and Most Merciful, and both are true at once. If your record troubles you, remember that the door of repentance does not close until the soul reaches the throat, and that Allah rejoices at the return of His servant more than a man who lost his mount in the empty desert and then found it again. And if your deeds please you, remember the Companions who feared their good deeds might not be accepted, and let that fear keep your worship sincere. The one with taqwā hopes like a man who knows the boundless generosity of his Lord, and fears like a man who knows the perfect justice of his Lord, and he lets neither hope nor fear stand alone.

The Promise to the People of Taqwā

Brothers and sisters, let us not forget where this road leads, for the one who labours is steadied by remembering the reward. Allah has prepared for the people of taqwā a recompense that no eye has seen and no heart has imagined, and He described their final home in words that should move every heart in this masjid. He said:

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَنَهَرٍ * فِي مَقْعَدٍ صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ مَلِكٍ مُّقْتَدِرٍ *

Indeed, the people of taqwā will be among gardens and rivers, in a seat of honour and truth, near a Sovereign, Perfect in Ability.

Sūrah al-Qamar (54:54 to 55)

Reflect upon the final words, near a Sovereign, Perfect in Ability. The greatest joy of that Garden is not its rivers, nor its fruits, nor its mansions, but the nearness to Allah Himself, and the gaze upon His noble Face, which is the highest gift He will grant to the people of taqwā. Every prayer we guard, every

glance we lower, every anger we swallow, every sin we follow with repentance, is a single step on the road to that seat of honour. Do not measure the steps as small. Measure where they are taking you.

Closing Du‘ā

Dear brothers and sisters, let us raise our hands to the One who never turns away a sincere servant. O Allah, we ask You for guidance, taqwā, chastity, and contentment, as Your Prophet ﷺ taught us to ask.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّا نَسْأَلُكَ الْهُدَى وَالتَّقَى وَالْعِفَافَ وَالْغِنَى.

O Allah, we ask You for guidance, God-consciousness, chastity, and sufficiency.

From the supplication of the Prophet ﷺ, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 2721

O Allah, make us among Your God-conscious servants, and grant us taqwā in our private moments before our public ones. O Allah, forgive the believing men and the believing women, the living among them and those who have passed. O Allah, set right the affairs of this Ummah, unite the hearts of the Muslims upon truth, protect our families and our children, and keep our young ones firm upon faith in an age of trial. O Allah, relieve the distressed, heal the sick, settle the debts of the indebted, and grant safety and provision to our brothers and sisters who are oppressed and afraid in every land, for You are the All Powerful and they have none besides You.

O Allah, forgive us and our parents, and have mercy upon them as they raised us when we were small. O Allah, accept from us our prayers, our fasting, and our standing before You, and overlook our shortcomings and our sins. O Allah, make the Qur'an the spring of our hearts and the light of our chests, grant us beneficial knowledge and hearts that truly fear You, and let our deeds be sincere for Your Face alone. O Allah, do not leave for us on this day a sin except that You have forgiven it, nor a worry except that You have relieved it, nor a debt except that You have settled it, nor a need from the needs of this world and the next except that You have fulfilled it and made it easy for us. O Allah, seal our lives with the best of deeds, and let the last of our words in this world be the testimony that there is no god but You. Our Lord, give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter, and protect us from the punishment of the Fire.

The Final Reminder

Remember the command of your Lord, the same command with which we opened and with which Allah closes the affair, the command of justice and excellence.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ
يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ *

Indeed, Allah commands justice, excellence, and giving to relatives, and He forbids immorality, wrongdoing, and oppression. He admonishes you that you may take heed.

Sūrah an-Naḥl (16:90)

So remember Allah, the Most Great, and He will remember you. Thank Him for His favours and He will increase you. And establish the prayer.

وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ